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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with teaching about the world of work at the secondary school level in Australia. The first half of the paper investigates major changes and developments occurring in the workplace and in the school, while the second half considers the issue of support for teachers striving to increase student understanding of work. Strengths and weaknesses of several different approaches to studying the world of work are described and analyzed, followed by a study of the support in Australia for teachers who have been trying to integrate the study of work into the school curriculum. Reference is made to the "Curriculum and the World of Work" program initiated recently by a national curriculum agency. Current strategies emphasizing cooperation, collaboration, and networking are also described. It is pointed out that increased support linking professional development and curriculum development is required if the world of work is to establish and maintain a place in the mainstream curriculum. (CB)

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Teaching about the World of Work: Trends and Developments in Australia

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'Teacher Education for The World of Work:
Economic, Social and Professional Imperatives
for the 21st Century'

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ABSTRACT

For some time in Australia there has been increasing pressure on teachers to place greater emphasis on the world of work as a component of the school curriculum. As a result, a diverse range of approaches to the issue of curriculum and work has been tried. An analysis of these approaches is provided in this paper and a recent initiative of a national curriculum agency concerning the world of work is discussed in some detail. An attempt is made to highlight some of the main strategies including co-operation, collaboration and networking that have been adopted. It is argued that in future, increased support linking professional and curriculum development will be required if schools are to integrate work across the curriculum with some degree of effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with bridging the gap between education and work. The general issue being addressed is: "As educators, how can we assist all young people to gain an understanding of the world of work?" More specifically, the paper is endeavouring to identify some of the strategies that might be usefully employed to support teachers in the achievement of this task.

Initiatives at the secondary level, ie Years 7-12, provide a focus for the paper. It is argued that the role of secondary schools should be to provide a general education. Vocational training is seen as the province of post-secondary institutions. 'The world of work', therefore, is defined in the broadest sense to include both paid and unpaid work as well as related issues such as unemployment.

In order to provide a context, a few general comments about the Australian educational system might be useful. Australia is a federal system in which the State governments have the major responsibility for education, particularly in relation to the compulsory period of schooling (up to the age of 15 years), and provide their own systems of primary and secondary schools. They also operate their own systems of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). At the primary and secondary levels, approximately 25% of Australian children attend non-government (private) schools, the majority of which are operated by the Catholic church. Approved non-government schools receive substantial financial assistance from the Commonwealth and State governments.

Since 1974 the Commonwealth has had total responsiblity for the funding of universitites and colleges of advanced education. The Commonwealth government provides supplementary finance to the States for primary and secondary schooling and TAFE. In addition to the provision of funding, the Commonwealth is involved in a policy-initiating and co-ordinating role. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), a division of the Commonwealth Schools Commission, is one example of an agency established to promote national curriculum objectives and to support the work of schools and education systems.

In summary, therefore, the total funding and administration of education in Australia can be seen as a rather complex arrangement involving federal, state and private interests.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK AND EDUCATION

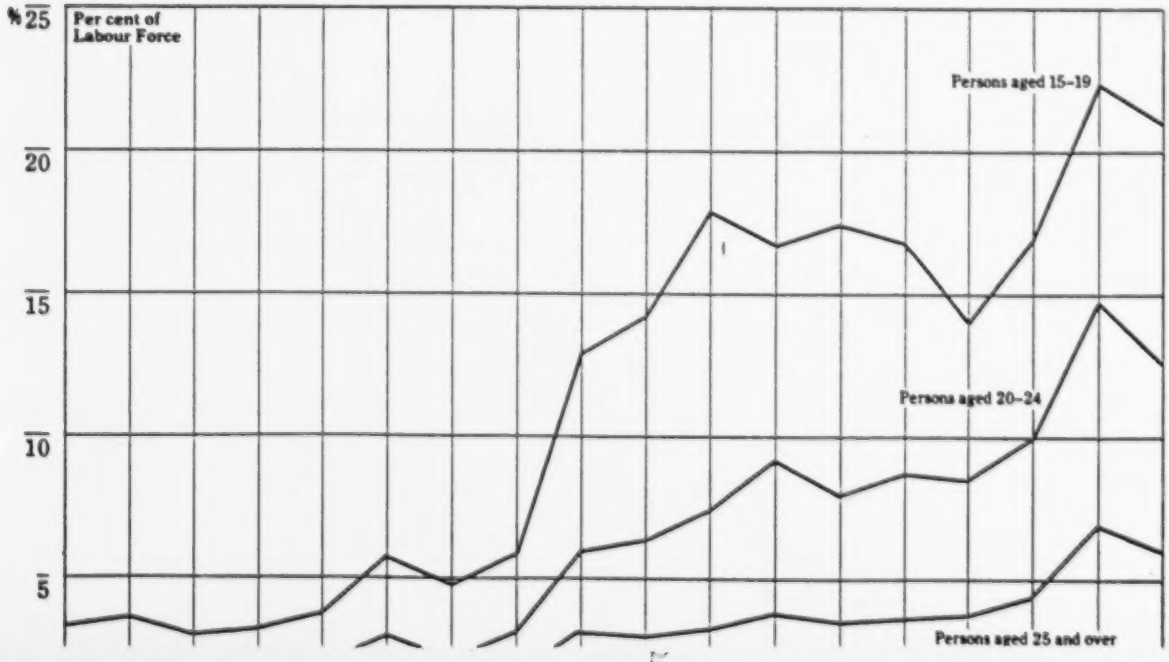
What kind of changes have taken place?

Over the last decade or so in Australia, there have been some significant changes occurring in the spheres of work and education. With regard to the former, one of the most notable has been the growth in unemployment. An overview of the current situation is described in one report as follows:

> "More than 600,000 people, through no fault of their own, want work but are without it; as many again want work but have given up the search; over 100,000 young people have completed their education but are denied the opportunity, in the long accepted way, of obtaining work, further training and independence; large numbers of women are treated as second class citizens in the labour market; substantial numbers of those with disabilities and other disadvantages are left without hope of obtaining the stimulation and companionship of work; and numbers of older people are hurried into a retirement which neither they nor the state are prepared to accept." (Kirby, 1985, 3)

The dramatic reduction in the number of full-time jobs available to 15-19 year olds has been a major issue of concern. As illustrated by Figure 1, the rate of youth unemployment increased nearly four times during the period 1974-84. The rate has remained above the level of 20% for the last three or four years.

Figure 1: Unemployment Rates by Age in Australia, 1967-1984



The rapid rise in youth unemployment and its failure to return to more "acceptable" levels have been well documented in Australia. Less widely publicised have been some of the major changes occurring in industry and commerce that have affected young people's share of employment within individual industries and occupational groups. The proportion of youth employed in the areas of manufacturing, construction, wholesale, retail and community service, for example, has decreased significantly over the last 10-15 years. In a more competitive labour market job seekers with demonstrated 'maturity and experience' (eg tertiary graduates and married women) have been more acceptable to employers who have traditionally taken on school leavers.

The unprecedented rate of technological changes in general, and developments in new information technology in particular have been significant. The decline in the share of total employment in the sectors of manufacturing and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, for example, can be attributed in part to changes in technology. Service industries, however, have increased their share, given their dependence on new technologies and information processing.

It is becoming more widely recognised that changes in the national economy that have occurred over the last ten years are of a structural and long-term nature, rather than in the form of temporary fluctuations. Most indicators at present would suggest that the prospect in the years ahead for many young Australians of permanent, full-time employment is not particularly favourable. Future trends in the youth labour market are described in another report as follows:

> "For the future, the types of employment most likely to grow appear to be those in installation, maintenance and repair, information processing, administration, clerical and other office activities, and personal services, both public and private. They are noteworthy because they are not tied to any particular industry or employer. Neither are they clearly associated with particular formal educational qualifications. At the same time they tend to involve high degrees of client contact and interpersonal skills which are not accommodated by traditional classifications of skilled and unskilled work, and they are not likely to provide many full-time job opportunities for teenagers. The young are no longer competitive in a changing labour market and those without educational qualifications are the least competitive. (Karmel, 1985, 57)

Alongside these changes in work there have been changes also in education. With regard to the latter, one of the most significant has been in terms of participation. An increase in the retention of students in the final two years of secondary education, for example, has been a general trend throughout Australia. The contents of Table 1 indicate that there has been an increase of over 12% in the retention rates of students to Years 11 and 12 over the last decade.

Table 1: Apparent Retention Rates, Australia (Percent)

	Govt	Non-Govt	Catholic	Other Non-Govt	All Schools
1st to Final Year (Year 12)					
1975	28.6	53.4	40.9	88.2	34.1
1980	28.4	56.1	44.8	87.9	34.5
1985	39.9	65.7	55.1	92.2	46.4
1st to 2nd Last Year (Year 11)					
1975	46.2	65.7	53.5	99.9	50.5
1980	48.7	72.2	60.9	104.2	54.0
1985	61.7	81.2	72.0	103.0	66.7
1st to 3rd Last Year (Year 10)					
1975	82.8	92.3	87.9	104.7	84.9
1980	88.5	97.1	93.5	107.0	90.5
1985	92.1	98.5	95.6	105.3	93.8

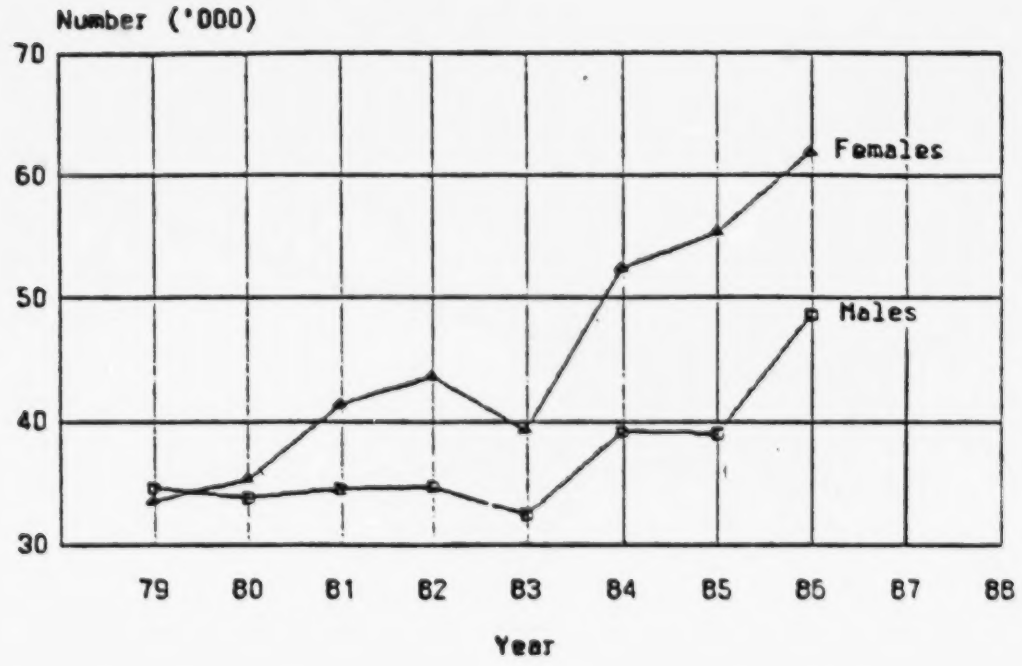
Source: Commonwealth Department of Education, 1986, P22

It should be noted, however, that there has been widespread recognition that in relation to other developed nations, Australia still has comparatively low rates of retention in the final two years of secondary schooling. Since 1983 the

Commonwealth government has been actively striving to increase the level of participation in schooling. By promoting policies and funding programs, the government has been emphasising the need for schools to review and develop many of their practices with a view to increasing opportunities for young people to complete twelve years of education or its equivalent.

Another change that should be mentioned is the increasing proportion of full-time students who have part-time jobs. As illustrated by Figure 2, the number has increased significantly during the 1980's. In March 1986, the proportion of school population aged 15-19 years working part-time was 24% for girls and 19% for boys (ABS Statistics).

Figure 2: Persons Aged 15-19 Years Attending School and Employed Part-Time (March 1979 to March 1986)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, March 1986

What impact have these changes had on educational policy development?

The rise in youth unemployment, the increase of retention rates and the impact of other changes in the economy and technology have presented public policy makers in Australia with unprecedented demands for change. Employers and other groups within the community have created additional pressure by voicing their concerns openly. The majority view of employers in a survey conducted recently, for example, was that:

> "written communication skills were of a poor standard, and that secondary students were inadequate with respect to business knowledge and understanding the nature of the work sought." (Business Council of Australia, 1986, 14)

The approach taken in this section is to review the impact of change by investigating the development of policy in an historical context.

In the 1970's, prior to the sharp rises in youth unemployment, the seeds of a policy on education and work had been sown. The creation of the Commonwealth Schools Commission in 1973, with its emphasis on overcoming educational disadvantage, led to the promotion of diversity and innovation in education. Schools were openly encouraged, for example, to develop closer links with the community. The policy of broadening the horizons of students, particularly with regard to post-school options - including work - was recommended.

The dramatic increases in youth unemployment in the mid-1970's triggered the response by the Commonwealth government in the form of the Transition from School to Work Program. One of the major aims of the program was to assist young people who were leaving school each year with poor employment prospects. In a worsening economic climate, therefore, a major policy shift occurred towards assisting certain groups of students identified as being at risk. During the period 1979-1983, educational systems and schools received substantial federal funding to develop programs designed to prepare these students more adequately for the workplace.

In the early 1980's further downturns in the economy and a change in the Commonwealth government led to another change in policy. Introduced as the "centrepiece for the overall framework of youth policies", the Participation and Equity Program was implemented in 1983. The major aims of the program are to achieve a significant increase in the participation of youth in secondary education and to promote greater equty in the outcomes of education for young people. The policy,

therefore, during the 1980's has shifted towards equipping all students with appropriate knowledge, understanding and personal skills to face the challenge of changing futures.

Within the last two or three years, however, the impact of the changes described in the preceding section of this paper on public policy can be seen most clearly in a series of reports. These have emerged from special committees established at both federal and state levels in the mid-1980's to review junior secondary and post compulsory education. In general, these reports have argued against a narrow and vocational emphasis in favour of a broad and general approach to secondary education. Some of the recommendations emerging from these reports signify a further clarification of policy to the extent that a study of the social, economic and historical aspects of work is identified as a priority area.

One example of this policy is provided in Victoria by the Blackburn Report (1985, 28), where it is argued that: "The study of work in society seems to us to be a meeting point for all students at post compulsory level, and to provide the substance of what should be studied by all". Another illustration is provided by the Karmel Report (1985, 74), where it is recommended that "a study of work as a major human activity deserves a place in the school curriculum".

Have these policies influenced teaching practice?

The short answer to this question is that the response has been extremely diverse. What follows is a brief description of some approaches that have been adopted during the last ten years in Australia.

(a) Work experience: It is now commonplace for students, (eg at Year 10), to participate in the work-place for several days during their course of study. Prior preparation and follow-up reflection in school by students are frequently considered important components of the total experience.

(b) Career education: Common characteristics of this initiative include the appointment of specialist 'Careers' teachers who assist in the identification of particular options open to students and the consequences of choosing such options. Individual and group counselling tend to be major components of this approach.

(c) School-leaver surveys: Many schools endeavour to identify and record the destinations of their exit-students. Such data can provide a valuable perspective on the extent to which schools are preparing their students for adult life - particularly when the surveys are planned, implemented and followed up by students.

(d) Integrated courses: At the senior secondary level, a small number of courses have been developed that incorporate work experience as a common component. Some of the approved study structures accredited provide useful examples of courses that endeavour to integrate the study of work across the curriculum.

(e) Work education: In some schools, specific programs are operating with the aim of preparing students for entering the work-force. This may include the development of skills such as applying for advertised vacancies and practising interview techniques. It may also include more extensive studies of the work environment through excursions and guest speakers.

(f) Personal-skills development: The emphasis here tends to be on developing self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem in students. Such skill development may be incorporated as part of an existing course or handled separately (e.g. in a pastoral care scheme).

(g) Link programs: Essentially, these involve collaboration and co-operation between the school and TAFE sectors. A major benefit of these programs for secondary students is to gain access to facilities that might otherwise be unavailable.

(h) School-industry links: A number of initiatives that focus on a 'tripartite' (i.e. employer, union, educational) approach to the study of work are currently in operation. The 'School Industry Project', the 'Know Biz' project and the 'Young Achievement Australia' scheme are just three examples.

(i) Student enterprises: Some schools have attempted to engage students in various enterprises that involve productive work. By designing, producing and marketing products within and outside the school community, sufficient income has been generated to finance other activities (e.g. an overseas trip for students has been

(j) 'New Careers': There have been some job creation schemes that have endeavoured to combine work and study - particularly in the human services area. The concept of a career ladder has been used to integrate education and work. A major objective is to create openings to the full-time work-force for young people.

(k) Community involvement: Some programs have been initiated to encourage students to play an active part in their local community. Programs such as the 'Student Community Involvement Program' (SCIP) have involved students in various community projects and socially useful work.

(l) Materials development: Various kits, manuals and audio-visual resources have been prepared on a range of issues including work experience, career education, and trade unionism. Many publications have emerged as a result of the responses mentioned above.

(m) Shadowing: In some schools, a small number of senior secondary students have been given the opportunity to observe a member of the work-force on a full-time basis over a limited period (e.g.two or three days). The objective is for students to gain an understanding of the various roles and functions undertaken rather than to acquire specific vocational skills.

(n) Re-entry programs: Several schools and TAFE Colleges have initiated programs that have provided opportunities for young and mature-age people to return to education. In many cases these programs have included various combinations of work and study.

(o) Specific courses: One of the more recent responses is to develop courses that may be compulsory for all students. A team is currently working in Victoria on 'Australian Society and Work' for students in Years 11-12. A team is also working in Western Australia on 'Personal and Vocational Education' for students in Years 8-10.

(p) Primary School Activities: A small number of primary schools have recently initiated units of work designed to counter the possibility of stereotyped perspectives and attitudes towards work developing in younger pupils.

(q) Alternative Programs: Some secondary schools have developed programs for Year 11 students not necessarily proceeding to tertiary study. An innovative feature of these programs is the combination of school, part-time work and community service.

(r) Equal Opportunity Projects: Several projects have been developed that are endeavouring to increase opportunities in curriculum and work for groups including girls and the disabled.

Have these teaching practices been effective?

A preliminary analysis of the developments of the last ten years suggests that there have been both positive and negative aspects to the diverse range of approaches to curriculum and the world of work that have been adopted.

In terms of strengths, for example, it is evident that as an outcome of many programs significant links have often been developed between schools and their local communities. In many instances there have been collaborative and co-operative ventures involving teachers, students, parents, local employers and community service organisations in various projects and activities.

Some programs have also enabled students to engage in practical learning experiences in a variety of settings outside the class-room, eg local businesses, municipal offices and voluntary agencies. Other programs have provided students with opportunities to gain specific information and experience with regard to occupations that they have considered pursuing when they leave school.

Many programs that have been part of these approaches, however, have been criticised on a number of grounds. A common criticism is that the programs have not been promoted as being desirable for all students. Instead, they have been directed towards those who have been identified as not proceeding to tertiary academic studies. As a consequence, many programs have suffered from a lack of status within and outside the school community.

Another perceived weakness of many programs is that they have remained isolated from the mainstream curriculum. An aspect of many work experience programs, for example, is that they have rarely been taken up by teachers of the key subject disciplines such as maths, English or Science. Criticism has also stemmed from a concern that many programs have not moved beyond a realatively static view of work and the work-place.

Negative responses to many programs have focused on their tendency to exacerbate competition between individuals and schools. By labelling certain students as 'low achievers', for example, potential difficulties in obtaining work are seen to be the fault of individuals rather than originating in a more complex environment of economic, social and political factors. Many have questioned the value of training students in the art of making job applications and conducting job interviews in a depressed youth labour market where there are limited opportunities for full-time paid employment.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF SUPPORT FOR THOSE TEACHING ABOUT WORK

What kind of support has been provided in the past?

The pattern of support in Australia for teachers who have been endeavouring to introduce the study of work into the school curriculum is quite complex. The purpose of this section, therefore, will be to provide a general overview of the main developments at both federal and state levels over the last 10-15 years.

The creation of specialist positions in many secondary schools has been a feature of most state systems. Although the titles have varied (eg Careers Teacher, Work Experience Co-ordinators or Youth Officers) the role and function of such personnel have tended to be similar. Many have used the position to establish work experience programs and to introduce special classes or programs designed to raise student awareness of post-school options.

In addition to creating specialist positions in schools, many educational systems have established support units at a central level. Consultants, for example, have been appointed with a view to providing advice and assistance to teachers endeavouring to introduce programs and activities in schools. The production of resource materials in the form of kits, videos and posters on aspects of work has often emerged from these central support units.

The provision of special purpose funding has enabled individual teachers and groups of teachers to initiate new programs, projects and activities at the secondary level. Programs designed to support federal policies referred to earlier in this paper have been major sources of funding. The Innovations Program, The Transition from School to Work Program and the Participation and Equity Program are three prime examples.

Professional development has been another important component of support for teachers. Utilising funds from both federal and state sources a diverse range of in-service education programs has been implemented. A number of tertiary institutions have developed award-bearing courses for teachers. One example is the Graduate Diploma in Career Education.

In addition to the support provided by education systems, there has been a considerable amount of community co-operation. Assistance from employers in both public and private sectors, for example, in the implementation of work experience and other programs has been substantial. The Institute of Public Affairs in Queensland has conducted a series of public lectures

designed to increase teacher unerstanding of the world of work. Some progress has been made between major industries and education systems with a view to establishing 'teacher exchange' schemes. The main objective of such schemes is to enable practising teachers to work in industry for a limited period of time.

What kind of support is being provided at present?

The purpose of this section is to provide information about a program tht is being implemented currently by the Curriculum Development Centre. Introduced as a policy initiative towards the end of 1985, the Council of CDC stated that "there is a clear need for a national co-operative program to contribute to a more precise understanding of the links between schooling and the world of work". (Curriculum Development Council, 1986, 31) Essentially, the CDC is endeavouring to promote a set of national objectives in this area of the curriculum while working collaboratively with educational systems. A fundamental aim of the program is to develop knowledge, skills and understandings about work in students. A major objective is to provide practical support for teachers.

For the purpose of the program, work is interpreted broadly to embrace a wide range of productive endeavours. Examples might include full-time paid employment; part-time, casual and contracted employment; unpaid work including home duties, voluntary work and school work. Other issues might include unemployment or training and development activities directly associated with paid employment.

Funding for the implementation of the program in the financial year 1986-87 has been set at the level of $75,000. Essentially, these funds will be spent on developing five projects. An expansion of the program is planned for 1987-88. A very brief outline of the current projects is listed below:

- Monograph and Bulletin Publications Project - The production of a series of ten discussion papers on specific aspects of work (eg history, gender, technological change and youth). A newsletter is produced also on a regular basis.

- Resource Materials Project - The development of a curriculum package on work for practical classroom use. The materials are directed towards students in Year 11.

- Work Experience in the Mainstream Project - The production of curriculum guidelines and resources that will assist teachers to incorporate work experience across the curriculum.

- New Models of Curriculum Development - The development of an experimental approach to curriculum development in the area of work that includes representatives from industry, local government, education and the community.

- Videotape Series Project - The production of several videos and support materials the first of which will focus on industrial relations. (Additional funding from an external source is being provided for this project).

The Curriculum and the World of Work Program is striving to build on the strengths and to minimise the weaknesses of the approaches that were identified in the first part of this paper. A range of strategies is being employed in the development of the five CDC projects. The main strategies can be described briefly as follows:

Co-operation is one of the key strategies. Three of the five projects are physically located in state education systems. The Resource Materials Project, for example, is based within the Victorian Ministry of Education, and is designed to complement a compulsory course being developed for Year 11 students that will focus on work.

The project on work experience is based in the Education Department of Western Australia and is designed to complement the development of courses in 'personal and vocational' education. The New Models of Curriculum Development Project is based in a rural area of South Australia where a Regional Council for Industrial Development has been established.

In each of these three cases, staff members from the agencies in which the projects are based are involved in developing and implementing the projects. In the Resource Materials Project, for example, two officers from the Victorian Ministry are employed on a part-time basis for three months to trial with practising teachers a set of materials prepared by the CDC. Staff within the CDC are co-ordinating the other two projects.

There has been considerable co-operation between CDC and the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. The latter has agreed to contribute $20,000 in 1986-87 towards the production of a videotape for secondary students on industrial relations. Representatives from the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Confederation of Australian Industry have been involved in preliminary discussions.

Collaboration is another strategy, an example of which can be seen through the monitoring of the program. At the national level, a small representative committee has been established to manage the program. For each of the five projects, however, reference groups have been established for developmental purposes. The aim of each reference group is to actively involve representatives from local employer, union, educational and community groups in tangible and productive outcomes. The intention, therefore, is to avoid large-scale deliberations and discussions of theoretical issues in favour of practical activities.

A second example of collaboration in the program is an agreement whereby the CDC is reprinting a resource kit on work produced initially by the TAFE system in Victoria. While the kit tends to have a state focus, the contents have been judged by the CDC to be of interest to practising teachers in other parts of Australia. This can be seen as a very good example of efficient use of resources when competition for the educational dollar is continually increasing.

Networking is one strategy that is perceived to be of considerable benefit to practising teachers. One of the first activities initiated in the program was to create a national network of approximatley 200 people with an interest in curriculum and work. A discussion paper on work was circulated within the network together with a survey sheet. Information provided subsequently by network members assisted the CDC in the framing of the program's five projects and in the production of a brochure listing of over 50 innovative activities underway during 1986, entitled "A Sample of Current Projects in Australia". One of the main ways of maintaining communication in the network is by the publication of regular newsletters, through which information and useful contacts are exchanged readily.

What kind of support will be needed in the future?

While a considerable degree of support has been provided for teachers who are endeavouring to promote the study of work in Australia, there is still room for improvement. It would seem highly desirable that support be directed in the future towards professional and curriculum development. The following statement reveals the extent to which the CDC perceives professional and curriculum development to be inextricably linked:

> "Curriculum development is most effective when it is seen as providing for teacher development and contributes to curriculum renewal. Changes in curriculum and organisation in schools depend heavily upon the people who teach in and manage schools. Without participation and acceptance by those most directly involved and affected, change will not easily occur. The linking together of curriculum development and teacher development must be seen as an essential aspect of all initiatives". (Curriculum Development Centre, 1985, 10)

A plethora of reviews and reports on Teacher Education in Australia over the last few years have contained recommendations calling for closer links between professional and curriculum development. A recent report, Improving Teacher Education (1986, 47) has stated that "it is imperative for teachers to be given capacity to deal effectively with curriculum change through appropriate in-service programs, the planning of which should occur at the same time as the curriculum initiatives are being developed".

A great deal of communication, collaboration and co-operation between educational systems and agencies at all levels will be required to ensure that the desired link between professional and curriculum development in the area of work is established and maintained. New relationships will need to be formed. New models of working developed. Teachers, students, parents as well as employers, unionists and community members will need to be actively involved.

In order to move from the general to the specific, a number of suggestions are advanced below. The suggestions are directed towards those with responsibility for professional and curriculum development in the area of work at all levels. The emphasis is on identifying forms of practical assistance.

- Teachers from different subject disciplines should be encouraged to be more open with each other about their current approaches to the world of work (eg To what extent is 'work' a component of their teaching at present? What degree of potential is there for team-teaching with colleagues from different subject areas?)

- Teachers should be actively involved in the preparation, trialling and evaluation of curriculum materials on work (eg What do teachers believe they need to teach about work? What materials are/are not likely to actively engage their students?)

- Teachers should be encouraged to develop local networks that will promote the dissemination of informaton and the generation of new ideas about the study of work (eg Which resources on work do teachers find most practical and relevant? How are they using them?)

- Students should be actively involved with teachers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of their own learning about work (eg What degree of potential is there for the 'negotiation' of curriculum between teachers and students? What do students know already about work from their participation in part-time employment and other experiences?)

- Representatives from the local community should be encouraged to participate with teachers in the development of curriculum about work (eg What suggestions can employers and others make in the light of work experience programs and activities with which they have been involved? What suggestions can exit-students make about school and its relationship to the world of work?)

- The study of work should be democratically organised and assessed (eg How can teaching and learning be planned and implemented to ensure that all students have access to 'powerful' knowledge about work? How can all students be encouraged to experience some degree of personal success?)

- School communities (ie teachers, students, parents and other representatives) should be encouraged to reflect upon and to document their approaches to curriculum and the world of work (eg What were we hoping to achieve? What problems did we encounter? What advice can we offer to others who may be embarking on a similar approach?)

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this paper to provide information that will help to shed some light on developments in Australia concerned with teaching about the world of work at the secondary level. The paper has been designed to give the reader some insight into (a) What has been done, (b) What is being done and (c) What still needs to be done.

It is apparent that the demands for teachers to change their curriculum to include the study of work has increased over recent years. Efforts have been made, and continue to be made at local, state and federal levels with a view to increasing student understanding of work. It should be emphasised, however, that in order for these efforts to reach their full potential, high levels of collaboration and co-operation are required.

To maximise the efforts being made, individual teachers within the one school and between schools will need to be more open with each other and be more willing to work together in developing approaches to curriculum and work that will benefit all students. School leaders will need to be more responsive and flexible to encourage and support new projects that have been carefully planned and developed in consultation with the educational and wider communities. Representatives from industry, commerce, local government and community agencies will need to adopt an active role in forging closer links between school and the 'workplace' as defined in the broadest sense.

In concluding this paper it might be appropriate to quote from the book Megatrends, where we are advised that "change is occurring so rapidly there is no time to react, instead we must anticipate the future". (Naisbitt, 1984, 18). Teachers who have taken up this challenge and who are striving to increase student understanding of work deserve high levels of encouragement and support. There has never been a better time than the present for collaborative action.

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